

Message Text

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SUBJ: BAHAMIAN PASSPORTS

REF: NASSAU 027

BEGIN SUMMARY: GCOB ISSUED STATEMENT CONFIRMING BAHAMIAN CITIZENS NO LONGER PERMITTED TO TRAVEL ON PRE-INDEPENDENCE BRITISH/BAHAMA ISLANDS PASSPORTS AS OF JANUARY 10, 1975. END SUMMARY.

1. VERBATIM QUOTE OF BAHAMAS INFORMATION SERVICES STATEMENT ON USE OF PASSPORTS FOLLOWS:

"NASSAU, BAHAMAS, JAN 8, 1975 -- EFFECTIVE FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 1975, BAHAMIAN CITIZENS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO TRAVEL ABROAD UNLESS THEY ARE IN POSSESSION OF VALID BAHAMIAN PASSPORTS, THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, THE HON PAUL L. ADDERLEY SAID TODAY.

"UP TO THE PRESENT TIME, 28,400 BAHAMIAN PASSPORTS HAVE BEEN ISSUED TO BAHAMIAN CITIZENS.

"MR. ADDERLEY POINTED OUT THAT AFTER JULY 10, 1973, IT WAS DECIDED THAT THERE SHOULD BE A TRANSITION PERIOD OF 18 MONTHS FOR THE ISSUING OF PASSPORTS TO PERSONS ENTITLED TO BAHAMIAN PASSPORTS.

"HOWEVER, MR. ADDERLEY EXPLAINED THAT THERE IS A CATEGORY OF PERSON IN THE BAHAMAS WHO IS IN POSSESSION OF A BRITISH PASS-
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PORT ISSUED IN THE BAHAMAS AND WHO IS STILL ENTITLED TO HOLD

A BRITISH PASSPORT.

"MR. ADDERLEY SAID THAT IS NOT THE INTENTION OF HIS MINISTRY TO FRUSTRATE THE FACILITY OF TRAVEL FROM THE BAHAMAS; CONSEQUENTLY, TEMPORARY TRAVEL DOCUMENTS WILL BE ISSUED WHENEVER NECESSARY.

"AFTER JANUARY 9, 1975, VALID BRITISH PASSPORTS ISSUED IN THE BAHAMAS PRIOR TO INDEPENDENCE MAY STILL BE USED FOR TRAVEL PURPOSES BY BRITISH SUBJECTS NOT BORN IN THE BAHAMAS, AND WHO ARE NOT ENTITLED TO A BAHAMIAN PASSPORT. BAHAMIAN CITIZENS WHO INTEND TO TRAVEL ABROAD AND WHO ARE NOT NOW IN POSSESSION OF VALID PASSPORTS SHOULD APPLY FOR THEM WELL IN ADVANCE OF THE DATE THEY INTEND TO TRAVEL."

2. AS INDICATED PARA 5 REFTTEL, EMBASSY HAS STOPPED ISSUING NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS TO BAHAMIAN CITIZENS IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE BRITISH/BAHAMA ISLANDS PASSPORTS. INS PRE-CLEARANCE UNIT AT NASSAU AIRPORT HAS ALSO STOPPED ADMITTING BAHAMIAN CITIZENS ON PRE-INDEPENDENCE PASSPORTS. BOTH EMBASSY AND US IMMIGRATION OFFICERS ARE REFERRING BAHAMIAN CITIZENS TO GCOB PASSPORT OFFICE FOR NEW DOCUMENTATION.

3. GCOB CONSIDERS PRE-INDEPENDENCE BRITISH/BAHAMA ISLANDS PASSPORTS REMAIN VALID FOR TRAVEL OF BRITISH SUBJECTS NOT BORN IN THE BAHAMAS. ALTHOUGH MOST SUCH TRAVELERS ALREADY HAVE US VISA'S IN THEIR PRE-INDEPENDENCE PASSPORTS, EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO ISSUE VISAS IN THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE PASSPORTS OF THOSE WHO DO NOT YET HAVE VISAS. INS PRE-CLEARANCE UNIT IS ALSO ADMITTING NON-BAHAMIAN BRITISH SUBJECTS ON PRE-INDEPENDENCE PASSPORTS.

4. THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE BAHAMAS IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT INFORMED CONSULAR OFFICER THAT NON-BAHAMIAN BRITISH SUBJECTS WHO TRAVEL ON PRE-INDEPENDENCE PASSPORTS WILL BE RE-ADMITTED INTO THE BAHAMAS UPON THEIR SHOWING EVIDENCE OF PROPER IMMIGRATION STATUS, E.G. NATURALIZATION UNDER BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT; "BELONGER" STATUS; RESIDENCE PERMIT; WORK PERMIT; WIFE OF BAHAMIAN. THEREFORE, INS PRE-CLEARANCE UNIT IS ALSO ASKING FOR SUCH EVIDENCE TO ESTABLISH RE-ADMISSABILITY INTO THE

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BAHAMAS BEFORE ADMITTING BEARERS OF PRE-INDEPENDENCE PASSPORTS INTO THE UNITED STATES.

5. WHILE A GOOD BIT OF PUBLIC CONFUSION EXISTS AT PRESENT, BOTH EMBASSY AND INS PRE-CLEARANCE UNIT BELIEVE PROBLEMS WILL BE SORTED OUT WITHOUT UNDUE DIFFICULTY OR WIDESPREAD DISRUPTION OF TRAVEL PLANS.
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